

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

October 21, 2005

The Honorable John Cornyn  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Citizenship  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I respectfully request that your subcommittee consider holding hearings on the Department of Homeland Security's response to very serious breeches of our nation's immigration laws. The use of undocumented workers in the construction industry has always been problematic. However, press accounts make clear that the practice has reached epidemic proportions in the Gulf Coast reconstruction effort.

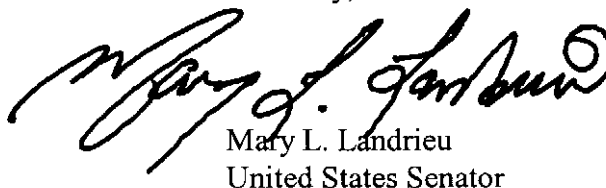
I am afraid only expedited action from Congress, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Labor will keep these violations of law in check. While the practice by subcontractors of employing illegal aliens is damaging under normal circumstances, at this time it is devastating. The Department of Labor reported yesterday that 478,000 Americans have lost jobs as a result of the two hurricanes. There can be no room in federal contracts for the unscrupulous practices of firms that violate the law, and keep our constituents from earning a living.

Earlier this week, I sent a letter to Secretary Chertoff of the Department of Homeland Security requesting that he dispatch additional personnel to Louisiana to see to the law enforcement dimension of this problem. Just yesterday afternoon, we confirmed reports that contractors at the Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, Louisiana were employing illegal workers, and that those workers had to be escorted off the base by immigration officers. In addition to that action, I would also like to encourage your subcommittee to exercise its oversight function with regard to this problem. I believe the time may have come for us to consider specific legislation that provides real penalties for federal contractors who violate these laws.

I thank you for your examination of these matters, and look forward to working with you to help provide meaningful protection for workers in the Gulf Coast region.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator